THE CHAPLAIN AND GROUP DYNAMICS

MONOGRAPH

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FORT SLOCUM, NEW YORK

Class 60-1
April 1960

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PREFACE

The old Proverb "Physician Heal Thyself" has often been used as a stimulus for self-analysis and self evaluation. It is a noble endeavor for the Chaplain to analyze carefully the quiescent, self-indulgent inclinations and strengths, but, the analysis must not be terminated by these findings. An accurate appraisal and evaluation must consider Chaplain relationship to the group climate in which he works, and the interaction of the members of the group upon him.

The Army, with its team concept, is aware of the impact of "group leadership" upon its organization, and the application of the principles of "Group Dynamics" to the accomplishment of its mission. The Chaplain, as a member and leader of the group, must seek to understand his role in the army structure, if he desires an understanding of the men with whom he works. He must comprehend the nature, context, culture, and customs of the group, for these are determining factors in determining his position, direction, purpose, and ultimately the

fulfillment of his goal. He can not assume that he will be successful because of his theological training, his traits, his ability, or the position to which he has been assigned.

Ross and Hendry, in their book New Understanding of Leadership, state six factors that must be understood and applied if a man is to be an effective leader. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the Chaplain's position and place of leadership in the light of these factors.

1. What are the expectations of those (Army & Ecclesiastical Groups) which assigned him his position?

2. What are the feelings of the military group toward him and his position?

3. What are the tasks before him in the light of the Army mission?

4. What is the nature of the Group(Army), and its members?

5. What is the prevailing climate of the service?

6. What is the background and conviction of the man, and how should he perform his task in this frame of reference (military climate)

These questions will not be answered according to the sequence given above, but each question will be covered in the development of the thesis, " The Chaplain and Group Dynamics".

INTRODUCTION

Rollo May, in his book, Man's Search for Himself, writes, "It takes courage not only to assert one's self, but to give one's self."[1] In studying the lives and deeds of great men it is discovered that they not only oriented themselves in extraordinary ways as leaders, but they also had the capacity to give themselves. They brought not only their own personal attributes into their interpretation of life, but they accepted and understood their relationship to the customs, culture, context, and organization of their group.

An evaluation of one's self as Chaplain and leader, is based upon certain objective and subjective criteria. Four very evident criteria of evaluation are as follows:

1. As an ecclesiastic. Religiously his life is determined, to a large degree, by ethnic and group factors. His present position is the result of an accumulation of all personal religious experiences and denominational or group direction. Religious concepts, emotions, theological and

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1 Rollo May, Man's Search for Himself, Norton & Co, New York, 1953, p. 227

denominational persuasion are environmental factors contributing to his development as a religious leader in his group.

2. As a Counselor and Teacher. Educational training enlightens and develops the concepts, and contributes the necessary resources for the promulgation of creeds and doctrines. Resources and tools such as Interview Materials, Clerical and Pastoral Training, Personal Therapy, and Academic Courses are studied and used for the accomplishment of the mission.

3. As an Officer. Through Military structure and institutional leadership the Chaplain is assigned rank and position. His assignment is based upon a TOE or TD slot, and his minimum duties in this particular position are clearly defined for him.

4. Personal traits of Leadership. An ecclesiastical board of interview, and the board of Officer interview must find some personal traits of leadership before endorsement and approval are made.

These professional criteria reveal only the basic essentials necessary for an evaluation of the leadership role of the Chaplain. The salient influences and interactions of the group are ignored.

The Chaplain must be cognizant that group culture, context, and organization are directly related to his role as leader. His functions, authority, and ultimately his value as a leader will be determined to a great degree by his ability to identify himself with the mission and purpose of the group. An ex-army Chaplain, who criticized the Protestant personnel of his post for their lack of religious loyalty and faithfulness to the Chapel program never considered the group and his identification with them.

> "It has been discouraging to note the small attendance at weekly worship services, not only my own services, but those conducted by other Protestant chaplains.... Some exceptions exist... A Chaplain with a dynamic personality, or one whose commanding officer pushes the program, may have a better response.....The men do not have enough inner discipline for Christian faithfulness in the Army..... Some men base their religious loyalty on their liking for individuals." 1

The Chaplain intellectualized about the problem, but because of profound inner conflicts and lack of understanding of the group, he failed to gve a true picture of the situation, or relate himself to the problem.

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1 Tracy Early, Why Army Churchgoing Lags, Christianity Today, III 20 July 1959, p. 12

Pastor J. T. Hoogstra, in his criticism of the chaplain's views stated,

> "Would not the Chaplain make mint by self-analysis? A soldier wrote me years ago that his Chaplain spoke on the World series before going into battle.....We have the redemptive love of God in Christ irrespective of the Chaplain.....Let each Chaplain remember the sacred task of preaching this mystery and than a worship must will become a worship privilege."[1]

Not as a criticaster surveying the flux of human activity from the uncertain pedestal of captious appraisal of the "dialogue" relation which should exist between leader and group, can one achieve the depth of understanding necessary for the religious leader. The Chaplain as a seeker and revealer of the truth, in his role of preacher, educator, counselor, and leader must evaluate himself in relation to his integral tasks as the expressions of the needs, purposes, goals, struggles and development of the group.

Ross and Hendry, in their book New Understanding of Leadership, define the leader's position as one of belonging. "A leader of the group must belong, be a member, and share in group basic values and goals. He must not let the group forget his special responsibilities and relationship to them."[2]

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1 J.T.Hoogstra, The Church and the Army, Christianity Today, IV 26 October 1959, p. 25

2 Murray G. Ross & Charles E. Hendry, New Understandings of Leadership, Association Press, New York, 1957, p.45

A vivid portrayal of "group identification" and "a sense of belonging" as related to the Chaplain's mission is presented in A Challenge to His Leader, by Frank W. Farrell, Lieutenant General, USA.

> "Among the leaders who influence the trooper and have won his heartfelt admiration, I know of no one who is more consistently outstanding than is the paratrooper padre. The reason for this appreciation is not hard to come by. He can take it as well as the toughest of his charges, and he does not hesitate to prove the fact. He asks no favors in a fraternity where the initiation and the dues are a continuing series of hard knocks. He gives the out-and-out-lie to the mistaken and sometimes held concept that a man of the cloth is somehow soft. He lives with his men. He knows them, and they know him. He comes to be a part of their operational scheme or picture. He is in a position to influence them far more than is the parish priest or the minister back home." 1

The Army, as well as the Geneva Convnetions, authorizes prisoners of war to organize themselves into groups. Only by unified, determined resistance by prisoners for their rights can the desired results be produced. Group solidarity and unified action are essential to the overall welfare of the prisoner of war population. A feeling of "belonging" must be instilled in each individual prisoner, and he must be convinced that he, personally, is making a worthwhile contribution to the group effort. If he feels it, then it is true.[2]

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1 Sampson, Francis L, Look Out Below, The Catholic University Press, Washington, 1958 p. 220

2. Department of Army Pamphlet #30-101, Communist Interrogation, Indoctrination, and Exploitation of Prisoners of War, 1956, p. 70-71

II THE NATURE AND PREVAILING CLIMATE OF THE GROUP

To understand and stress the importance of group interaction and behavior is not to discount the importance of the individual in the group. The individual is still the core of the group and his needs and sensitivities must always be considered. However, due to the strong emphasis upon the democratic principle of "individual rights", we have closed our minds to the power of the group. Group behavior in the final analysis is individual behavior

In the group the conscious personality of the individual does not vanish, as it does in ochlocracy, mob rule but it exerts itself both as leader and follower in the fulfillment of individual needs, learning, and objectives. An individual can be one of the crowd, but unless interaction and a strong feeling of belonging exists there is little or no identification or purpose. Rudolph M. Wittenberg, in his book, The Art of Group Discipline, portrays the ability of the individual to live in a group without being a part of the group.

> "They thought it was a good idea if Michael were taken into the group, but no matter what Michael does they haven't accepted him. He has wonderful ideas about program planning. He wants to help in basketball and is a good player; he straightens up; he is the first one to come and the last to leave——but somehow he does not belong. When they go home

in the bus, he sits by himself most of the time while the others are in a huddle. Michael is a member of the group, but he does not belong."[1]

While the Chaplain lives within the "culture" of his denomination, his interpretation of doctrines, church polity, and the development of the church program are indicators of his acceptance and group identification. His whole life—feeling, thinking, and devotion—have been planned and motivated toward this end. His congregation, the primary group of his activities, becomes the frame of reference for the accomplishment of his goals. It is in this community relationship that his task of bringing men to God, and God to men, is first fulfilled and realized.

"The status of a Chaplain in the Army is that of a religious and spiritual leader."[2] This does not change the original mission of the man of God, but it does place him in a different frame of reference for the accomplishment of the mission. "His duties are those which are required by law and which pertain to his profession..The duties of Chaplains are analogous to those perfored by clergymen in civilian communities, modified by the distinctive conditions and circumstances of military life."[3]

1 Rudolph M. Wittenberg, The Art of Group Discipline, Association Press, N. Y. , 1951 p. 28

2 AR 165-15 Sec I para 2

3 Department of Army Pamphlet 16-60, The Chaplain as a Counselor, April 1958, p. 37

The military recognizes the need for religious worship and leadership by commissioning priests, ministers, and rabbis to serve the religious and moral interests of the military community. It expects the chaplain to learn the customs, courtesies and policies of Army life. It also expects him to adapt his religious mission to the requirements of peacetime and wartime operations.[1]

In this institutional relationship and structure he finds himself being assigned to definite tasks. The authority he possesses for making decisions, carrying out responsibilities, and enlisting the cooperation of others is clearly defined for him in army regulations. His position, and the authority which that position converys are revealed in the TOE and TD structure. The authority of any single individual is circumscribed and defined by the authority of others.

The Chaplain is the commander's staff adviser and consultant on all matters which influence or pertain to the religious life, morals, and morale of all personnel in the command. As a member of the staff the Chaplain assists his commander and his fellow staff officers in integrating the principles of good

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1 ibid p. 37

citizenship and moral conduct in the training program and total life of the command.[1]

This is not authority by interpretation, but one which is spelled out for him in regulations, directives, and orders for the establishment of strict military control and discipline. However, the authoritarian leadership within the military is not the oly leadership which is emphasized. In fact, one of the Chaplain's greatest techniques is the army's emphasis on persuasive leadership. "Persuasive leadership takes into consideration the human element with all its complexity and its differences in the physical, mental, and emotional capabilities and limitations of the individual. To a great extent, the persuasive leader bases his skill in leadership upon example and ability, with high standards of discipline and efficiency for himself as well as his followers."[2]

The Chaplain's position, as a group leader, rests in his ability to become a persuasive leader, directing the behavior of men in such a manner that they grow and operate productively as a group. His authority rests in his ability to establish a climate wherein honest feelings can be accepted and discussed in an objective way. He must have the respect for the individual, his own decisions, and the choices and rights

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1 op cit para 2 B
2 FM 22-100 Military Leadership, 1958 p. 10

of others. His goal of bringing men to God and God to men must constantly be viewed in the mission which the United States Army has set down for him as a group leader.

III WHAT ARE THE FEELINGS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE GROUP

The feelings and expectations of the primary and secondary groups, toward the chaplain and his activities rests almost entirely upon the chaplain's response to the mission of the unit. All of his personal traits and attitudes will have to be used. If his group is to become productive he must share in "initiating, planning, carrying-out, and evaluating the work which must be done". People tend to respond and flourish when they are encouraged to participate in planning.

No group will respond if it is pushed, dominated talked-down to, or compared compared in an unfavorable light. Chaplain's must assist in creating an "atmosphere or climate for productive accomplishment of the mission." He as a leader and member of the group must help set the mood, tone or atmosphere within which the group operates. In order to attain and maintain the best possible climate, there are several characteristics which must be present.

1. The most pertinacious is that of Empathy.

"The ability to identify with, and respond to, the emotional needs of the members of the group, and/or to be the object of identification of group members".1 Members of the group must recognize and feel him to have greater sensitivity and warmth.

The Characteristic of empathy is emphasized and incorporated into the very structure of religion. A congregation, in an attitude of worship, is the best illustration. Strobachs Manual of Worship, states that "The Individual as he goes to church should as far as possible cease to be an individual, should realize himself to be an integral part of the congregation."[2]

Acceptance and identification in the group produces a war, safe, secure climate which encourages a deeper sharing, increases each persons desire to contribute, and brings about important attitude changes. The spread of empathy within a group may contribute to greater efficiency and productivity.

The military emphasis on person-centered rather than mission-centered climate, affords the Chaplain, with his religious training and moral leadership, to develop a strong spirit of empathy within the group. His greatest asset should be his "Love of People", and a willingness and desire to be identified with them.

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1 Ross and Hendry, op cit p75

2 Hiltner, Seward, Pastoral Counseling, Abingdon-Cokesbury, New York, 1952 p. 136

2. Intellectual stability and competency.

These two characteristics are closely allied for both imply training and thorough preparation. Training must be a continuous process for the interests of a military group change and develop. The Chaplain, to be effective must be able to communicate in this changing atmosphere, and respond intelligently to the group demands. Recognition, by the military, of the need for continuous training due to these changing donditions, climate, and environment, has resulted in a strong program of service and civilian schooling.

Intellectual stability implies a respect for the creativity of others, and intellectual hospitality. The Chaplain must continually seek new ways to improve the welfare of his group in relationship to the demands of their work and activities. Demands for a strong psychological insight into the behavior of his men, and the capacity to allow others to grow, compel the chaplain to seek intellectual stability and competence.

Competence to function in good and evil times with poise and serenity is the result of intellectual and emotional stability. The Chaplain must feel that he has the ability to direct, and create within the

the group an interaction which is favorable to the accomplishment of the mission.

3. Motivation

Motivation is a strong factor to be considered in group relationships. The leader, as well as those being led must feel and understand the mission or goal of the group. Not only must the Chaplain motivate his men toward the attainment of specified goals and objectives, but he too must be motivated by his superiors. Recognition of success, praise, medals, honors are means which the service uses for motivating and encouraging the men.

Many new Chaplains become discouraged in their first assignment because of a lack of recognition by their superiors of the work being accomplished. Discouragement, which results in frustration, defeat, hostilities, negativism, withdrawal and depression often is the result of improper recognition and inadequate motivation. Being able to understand and communicate intelligently in the army climate will assist the chaplain in the field of motivation.

The result of identification, motivation, and recognition is a greater sensitivity, warmth, and understanding within the unit. Lieutenant General James M. Gavin, reveals this sensitivity and warmth

when he described the paratrooper padres.

> "They as a group, are moved by a spirit of dedication and conviction, dedication to a belief in how things should be done, and motivated by a conviction that what must be done will be done. They must not only be physically courageous, but inspiring in their leadership."1

A Chaplain may join the service for a variety of motives, and he finds satisfaction for his personal needs as he becomes involved in its activities. However, there are some Chaplains, who because of over-compensation, aggressive or withdrawing behavior, and rationalization, find themselves involved in interpersonal difficulties which tend to block effective military action and understanding. The Army requires its officers to be flexible, logical, friendly, and possess the ability to communicate intelligently about their field. The same requirement is placed upon the Chaplain. He must possess emotional and educational stability, be competent in the performance of his duty, and by training and proper motivation seek to accomplish the mission set down for him by the service.

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1. Sampson, Francis L. Look Out Below, The Catholic University Press of America, Washington, 1958 p. 223

IV CONCLUSION

Leadership ability is a combination of natural endowment and learned behavior. A Chaplain, in the development of his leadership abilities and skills, just first of all become a good group memeber—a good participant. No matter who phase of life the Chaplain touches he comes face to face with the power of group dynamics. The Army (staff and units), schools, Chapel, social groups, classes, familiess, all represent the devoted work of people joined together in a group.

The army, as a group, is not a living, breathing organism with a heart and soul of its own. It is a group of men drawn together by a common mission and purpose as set down by our government. These men think, feel, will and are filled with all the emotions and desires of life.

To be a leader of these men, the Chaplain must possess a strong feeling of belonging to, and identification with the group. He must seek to know the climate in which the group works and lives. He must assist his commander in creating an atmosphere for procutive accomplishment of hhe mission.

The Chaplain can not live in a spiritual and physical ionsphere, but he must share in all the experiences, hopes, aspirations, and failures of his group. Rollo May's statement, which opened the

thesis, is used as a closing challenge. "It takes courage not only to assert one's self, but to give one's self." The power of group dynamics is generated when all members of the group give themselves unselfishly, devotedly, and without reservation to the accomplishment of the mission, or goal. Our goal of bringing Men to God and God to Men has a greater challenge and impact because of the group climate in which we work.

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